Appl. No. 10/731,805
Amdt. dated December 17, 2007
Reply to Office Action of July 16, 2007

PATENT

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed July 16, 2007. Claims 1-26 were pending in the present application. This Amendment amends claims 1, 2, 6, 17, 18, 19, and 20, without adding or canceling any claims, leaving pending in the application claims 1-26. Reconsideration of the rejected claims is respectfully requested.

I.   Objection to the Claims

Claims 2, 11, 18, and 20 are objected to as reciting the term "meta" before "metadata object." It is respectfully submitted that the term "meta metadata object" is defined in the specification in paragraph [0022] as filed, for example. In order to advance prosecution, Applicants have amended claims 2, 18, and 20 to recite simply a "metadata object", with the understanding that a metadata object can refer to another metadata object or can otherwise include or provide any functionality as set forth in the specification relating to the term "meta metadata object." The term "meta" does not appear by itself in claim 11, and a meta-language should not be indefinite, so Applicants respectfully submit that claim 11 does not recite anything that can be construed as a superfluous "meta". As such, Applicants respectfully request that the objections with respect to these claims be withdrawn.

II.   Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 14, 15, 17, 19, and 25-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over *Drake* (US 2003/0070142) in view of *Rasmussen* (US 7,185,016). Applicants respectfully submit that these references do not teach or suggest each element of these claims.

For example, Applicants' claim 1 as amended recites a computer-implemented method of validating metadata for an object model stored in a database, comprising:

> identifying a first subject of validation, wherein the first subject is one of an object, an attribute, an association and a collection of objects;
> determining a context of metadata validation based on the first subject, the context including one of a) the first subject, and b) the first subject and one or more additional subjects;
> determining one or more validation rules for each subject in the context; and
> applying the determined validation rules to each subject in the context,
> wherein applying the determined validation rules results in one of partially and completely validating the metadata for the object model, a partial validating of the object

> model allowing an existing portion of the metadata to be validated before all metadata for
> the object model is determined

(*emphasis added*). Such limitations are neither taught nor suggested by these references.

For example, *Drake* teaches coupling validation with the relevant data values such that the validation becomes part of the data model (paragraph [0018]). *Drake* further teaches that the validation process can be done at an early point, such as where the data model is preloaded with data values (paragraph [0021]). In such a case, a complete validation is done with pre-populated data, which data later can be altered/mutated and another validation done (paragraph [0021]). *Drake* does not, however, teach the application of different validation rules for an object model at different times, such as allow for partial validation when not all metadata has been determined and complete validation after all metadata has been determined. *Drake* at best teaches doing a full validation when dummy or "pre-loaded" values are determined for all metadata, then doing another full validation after all updated metadata values have been determined. Further, as recognized in the office action, *Drake* does not teach or suggest the data being metadata in an object model stored in a database (OA p. 3). For at least these reasons, *Drake* cannot render obvious Applicants' claim 1.

Combining *Rasmussen* with *Drake*, even if there were motivation to do so, would still not render obvious Applicants' claim 1. *Rasmussen* teaches transforming metadata models containing model objects in a reporting system (col. 1, lines 6-11; col. 3, lines 45-53), and is cited as teaching metadata being stored in databases (OA pp. 3-4). Such teaching would at best store metadata for the *Drake* validation processes in a database, and still would not result in, or provide motivation for, the application of different validation rules for an object model at different times, such as to allow for partial validation when not all metadata has been determined and complete validation when all metadata has been determined. As such, the combination of *Rasmussen* with *Drake* cannot render obvious Applicants' claim 1, or the claims that depend therefrom. The other claims recite limitations that similarly are not rendered obvious by these references for reasons including those set forth above.

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Claims 2, 4, 18, and 20-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over *Drake* and *Rasmussen* further in view of *Mikhailov* (US 6,968,500). These claims are not rendered obvious by *Drake* and *Rasmussen* as discussed above. Combining *Mikhailov* with these references, even if there were motivation to do so, still would not render these claims obvious. *Mikhailov* teaches an automatic forms handling system (col. 1, lines 8-15; col. 5, lines 19-38), and is cited as teaching a group of types of associated metadata (OA p. 9). Such teaching alone would not render obvious the use of objects such as MetaAssociationEnd, and a combination of these references still would not result in, or provide motivation for, the application of different validation rules for an object model at different times, such as to allow for partial validation when not all metadata has been determined and complete validation when all metadata has been determined. As such, the combination of *Rasmussen* with *Drake* and *Mikhailov* cannot render obvious these claims.

Claims 7-13, 16, and 22-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over *Drake* and *Rasmussen* further in view of *Lindberg* (US 2003/0028540). These claims are not rendered obvious by *Drake* and *Rasmussen* as discussed above. Combining *Lindberg* with these references, even if there were motivation to do so, still would not render these claims obvious. *Lindberg* teaches a system for transferring information between a user interface and a database over a network (paragraph [0010]), and is cited as teaching a first subject as a root object for a collection of associated objects (OA p. 11). A combination of these references still would not result in, or provide motivation for, the application of different validation rules for an object model at different times, such as to allow for partial validation when not all metadata has been determined and complete validation when all metadata has been determined. As such, the combination of *Rasmussen* with *Drake* and *Lindberg* cannot render obvious these claims.

Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejections with respect to these claims be withdrawn.

III.   **Amendment to the Claims**

Unless otherwise specified or addressed in the remarks section, amendments to the claims are made for purposes of clarity, and are not intended to alter the scope of the claims or limit any equivalents thereof. The amendments are supported by the specification and do not add new matter.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 925-472-5000.

Respectfully submitted,
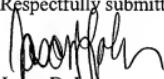
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